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About the monthly Water Level bulletin

November Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term November average:

Great Lakes Basin	144%
Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)	136%
Lake Superior	96%
Lakes Michigan-Huron	164%
Lake Ontario	166%

LEVEL news

Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Volume 3, Number 12 **December 6, 1995**

Heavy Precipitation in November

Seasonal Decline in Levels Stopped

The second consecutive month of above average precipitation on the middle and lower portions of the Great Lakes Basin held lake levels almost constant at a time of year when they usually decline.

At the start of December, Lake St. Clair was 23 cm above average for the time of year, while Erie and Ontario were 16 and 19 cm, respectively, above average.

Lake Ontario's situation has seen a dramatic change since its levels were as much as 22 cm below average in May of this year. Abundant water supplies first brought in by Hurricane Opal in early October and then by other weather systems that followed has stopped the seasonal decline of its level. The lake's outflow has also increased to 8120 m^3/s by early December, about 23% more than average.

Lake Superior declined to about 4 cm below average, while Lakes Michigan-Huron stayed at 4 cm above average in early December.

Great Lakes water levels are expected to remain well within the historical range for the coming winter and as such, the threat of serious flood damage remains low. Much higher than (continued on next page) average outflows from Lake Ontario are anticipated in the coming weeks, which will reduce the risk of flooding on that lake next spring.

Ten Years Ago: Severe Storm Hit Lake Erie

Ten years ago a storm that caused major destruction around Lake Erie roared through the area. In the early morning hours of December 2, 1985, southwest winds gusting to 100 kilometres per hour pushed the water level at Fort Erie up by about 2.4 metres, to the highest level on record. The accompanying waves pounded the shoreline, eroding beaches and damaging kilometres of shore protection. Over thirty cottages were destroyed at Long Point alone, and many others were damaged or destroyed along the eastern end of the lake by waves and flooding. Emergency crews assisted in the evacuation of residents trapped in low-lying homes.

Note: These figures are preliminary.

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Summary information for "LEVEL*news*"

The American side of Lake Erie also took a severe pounding, as did the southeastern shores of Lakes St. Clair and Huron. While property damages from the storm were extensive, fortunately there were no deaths reported. Advance warning of the impending storm helped prevent the loss of any ships and alerted emergency crews.

Cold Temperatures Arrive Early

Several cold weather fronts entered the lower Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River area in November. This was earlier than normal and if conditions remain the same, an early freeze up will occur on the St. Lawrence River.

St. Lawrence Board Meets Public in Montreal: Environmental Issues A Concern

The November 7th public consultation meeting in Montreal convened by the International St. Lawrence River Board of Control and the International Joint Commission attracted about 65 people. Concerns about the environmental effects of Lake OntarioSt. Lawrence River water level and flow regulation dominated the discussions. Presentations by the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Quebec Ministry of Environment and Wildlife and others emphasized the important link between fluctuating water levels and flows and environmentally sensitive wetland and aquatic habitat areas of the St. Lawrence River. Presentations were also made to the Board on the economic importance of commercial shipping in the St. Lawrence River.

This was the last of six public consultation meetings that the St. Lawrence Board held this year about possible changes to the Commission's criteria for the regulation of Lake Ontario outflows. The Commission has asked the Board to develop an outline of how to identify and assess possible changes to the criteria that might be needed to address changing conditions and interests. Modifications to regulation that will respond to the needs of shoreline property owners, recreational boating and environmental concerns are being called for by public interest groups.

The Board plans to submit the description of work required to examine regulation criteria changes to the International Joint Commission by early January 1996. The Commission will then consider whether and how to proceed with this work.

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